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USING INTERACTIVE READING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES TO
PROMOTE LITERACY IN A KINDERGARTEN CLASS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education:
Bilingual/Cross-Cultural Education

by
Chaches García Ross

June 2003

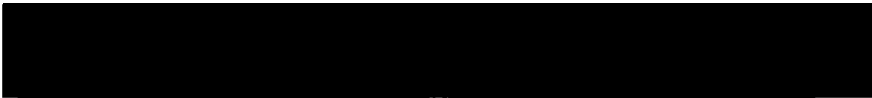
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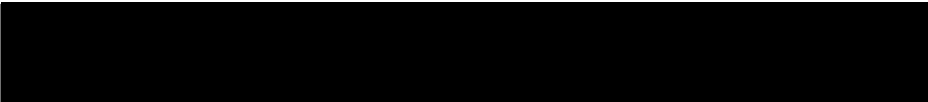
A Project
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Chaches García Ross

June 2003

Approved by:


Dr. Barbara Flores, First Reader


Dr. Esteban Diaz, Second Reader

4-29-03
Date

ABSTRACT

This yearlong study focused on literacy teaching and learning in one kindergarten classroom at a school in the Riverside Unified School District. The 20 focal students in this study are Spanish speaking children enrolled in a SEI kindergarten class. The children were observed in their half-day kindergarten classroom throughout the 2001/2002 school-year. The teacher in this classroom conducted daily informal observations, collected students' written samples, whole class interactive written samples, as well as the district's mandatory trimester assessments in reading and writing, in order to determine students' level of proficiency in literacy throughout the year and at the end of the school year.

The purpose of this study was to describe how the teacher, as sociocultural mediator of instruction (Diaz and Flores 2002), can use whole group interactive reading and writing activities to promote literacy, reading and writing proficiency, in a Kindergarten bilingual class. The major goal was to describe students' literacy development as well as the instruction they received throughout the school year.

The results showed that using interactive reading and writing activities within the context of literature is

an effective way to teaching. At the end of their kindergarten year, and using the district's third trimester writing assessment to determine students' level of proficiency, out of the 18 students remaining in my class 1 student received a score of one, 3 students received a score of two, 2 students received a score of three, and 12 students received a score of four which is the top score in writing for kindergarten. These twelve students were students who had been in my class since the beginning of the school year.

At the end of the school year, students received the district reading test, DRA assessment, and the results were as follow: Out of 18 students 4 students were reading at level A, which is a below basic reading grade for kindergarten at the end of the year; 2 students were reading at level 3 which is a proficient reading level at the end of the year in kindergarten, and 3 students were reading at level 4 which is the score that indicated proficient at the end of kindergarten. I also had 6 students reading at level 8, and 3 students reading at level 10 with a reading comprehension of 95%.

In conclusion, as evidence presented by the above presentation of findings, the results show that using interactive reading and writing activities to promote

literacy, reading and writing proficiency, is an effective way to teaching. This methodology of instruction allows students to participate in an interactive and non-threatening environment in which they are active participant in their learning. Furthermore, while students active participate in these interactive reading and writing activities, the teacher can assess students' literacy development on a daily basis. In addition, using the results of his/her daily assessments, the teacher can organize instruction accordingly to continue meeting the needs of each individual student in the class.

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to describe how the teacher, as sociocultural mediator of instruction (Diaz and Flores 2002), can use whole group interactive reading and writing activities to promote literacy, reading and writing proficiency, in a Kindergarten bilingual class. The classroom under study is a Structure English Immersion class, also known as SEI or Option 1 class, in the Riverside Unified School District. In the RUSD SEI means that language arts instruction, reading and writing, is taught in the student's primary language, in this case, Spanish.

Context of the Problem

Throughout this study, I will analyze the impact that interactive reading and writing activities have in helping students understand the connection between oral language and written language, as it applies to the reading and writing processes in a bilingual kindergarten classroom or SEI classroom. I will describe the methodology of instruction used in my classroom during Language Arts instruction. I will explain how I use a combination of

phonics and whole language instruction strategies within the context of literature. In addition, I will show a three weeks lesson plan explaining how I conduct instruction in this content area. Accordingly, I will show samples of the interactive writing activities that the students have done during these lessons. Goodman (1987) urges teachers to become empowered, to take charge of their classrooms, and to use phonics instruction properly. I believe that by combining the Whole Language pedagogy and the phonemic approach into my teaching strategies, I can teach my students reliable learning strategies that they can use to conquer the obstacles they might encounter in their journey to becoming literate, readers and writers.

Furthermore, during this study I will examine and assess the effectiveness of my methods of instruction by conducting informal assessments on the alphabetic principal and concepts of print, on the daily basis, during whole group interactive writing activities. In addition, in order to document the effectiveness of these strategies I will show students' end of the year writing results. I will also show the results of the final reading exam collected at the end of the school year.

In order to assess students' writing proficiency, I will use RUSD writing rubric for kindergarten in order to grade students written samples, using the same ruling for each sample. In addition, I will use RUSD DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) assessment method or Running Records method to assess students' independent reading abilities and their reading comprehension level, according to district standards and benchmarks.

This project has two objectives: 1)to encourage the teacher to use authentic literature in their classroom to promote reading and writing and 2)to demonstrate how the teacher as sociocultural mediator of instruction can combine whole language and phonics instruction strategies to create a strong literacy program for his/her students.

Significance of the Project

Teaching authentic reading and writing is important at any grade level because children have the opportunity to write about their experiences and their knowledge. Using authentic children's literature to teach the reading and writing process allows children to see themselves as real writers or authors because they can associate their prior knowledge and experiences to those of the characters in the stories they are reading. It is important to

acknowledge the fact that our students come to our classroom with extensive knowledge about their family's cultural traditions and language. As sociocultural mediators of knowledge, we, as teachers, need to take into consideration our students' "spontaneous concept" and help them relate their prior experiences to the literature we are studying and analyzing in the classroom.

When we, teachers, encourage our students to associate their prior knowledge or experiences to those of the literature we are reading in the classroom. We are allowing them the freedom to use the tools they already have in place to help them make connections between their prior knowledge and the new knowledge. We are giving them the freedom to experiment with learning strategies, those strategies that best work for them.

This study is important for Hispanic students and other minority students because it takes into consideration the student's prior knowledge, knowledge acquired outside the classroom. It takes into consideration the student's cultural, social and economic background and it shows how students, when allowed, can use their prior knowledge to make sense of their new knowledge or school knowledge. It shows why it is important to respect our students cultural values and

tradition, and it shows how the teacher can also learn from his/her students.

Everything we do in our life has a purpose and has meaning; in other words, we do what we do for a reason. Therefore, learning to read and write for our students has to have meaning and has to have a purpose. In this case, for our students the purpose of learning to read and write is communication, being able to communicate their thoughts and their ideas.

How can we, the classroom teachers, develop a systematic approach to teaching authentic reading and writing to our students? The answer is simple. As teachers, we need to take into consideration the academic needs of our students, and we need to plan instruction appropriately to meet students individual needs; furthermore, we need to encourage our students to associate their prior knowledge or experiences to those of the literature we are reading in the classroom because, by doing so, we are providing our students with the mediation they need to make sense of the new knowledge. Likewise, we, teachers, need to understand how children's literacy knowledge develops and how they learn in order to organize the teaching strategies needed for our class. This type of pedagogical knowledge on the part of the teacher is

important because it helps facilitate students' literacy development and learning.

Current research supports the fact that children learn to read by reading and they learn to write by writing their thoughts and their experiences (Brushy, 1988; Smith, 1985). Goodman (1986) tells us that writing development flourishes when whole language based instruction is provided. In this pedagogy, writing is considered a meaningful form of communication and not a set of learning skills. Students should be encouraged to write for an authentic purpose. Kuball and Peck (1995) emphasized the fact that children learned through literature not through workbook exercises and worksheet exercises alone. They also tell us that the classroom learning environment, in which students learned, needs to be that in which young children learn to speak, walk, and socialize. It needs to be a natural and safe learning environment. I believe that quality children's literature enables teachers and students to participate in authentic writing programs that help children make a connection between their "spontaneous concept", prior knowledge of subject, and the new "scientific concepts, schooled knowledge" (Vygotsky 1986).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made regarding the project:

1. The teacher has the pedagogical knowledge to facilitate children's literacy development and learning.
2. The teacher understands how children's literacy knowledge develops and how they learn.
3. The teacher is willing to take into consideration students' cultural, social and economic background, as well as to allow students to use their cultural knowledge as the foundation to acquire new knowledge.
4. The teacher is willing to respect students' cultural values and traditions as well as to learn from his/her students.

Limitations

During the development of the project a number of limitations were noted. These limitations are presented in the next section.

Limitations

The following limitations apply to the project:

1. This study gives a limited picture of literacy instruction and learning in one kindergarten

bilingual classroom, in one school site within one school district.

2. This study took place in one kindergarten classroom in one school and thus results cannot be generalized.
3. For the purpose of this project, I was only able to follow my students progress through the first trimester of first grade.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they apply to the project.

Alphabetic Principle: The assumption that each sound or phoneme of a language should have its own distinctive graphic representation.

Assessment: The act or process of gathering data in order to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of students learning.

Context Clues: Information from the immediate textual setting that helps identify the meaning of a word or word groups.

DRA: Developmental Reading Assessment.

Phonemic Awareness: is the conscious ability to segment spoken words into their constituent phonemes.

Phonics: is the ability to represent each sound in a word by its letter, letter/sound correspondence.

SEI: Structured English Immersion.

Spontaneous Concept: prior knowledge, knowledge acquired at home or outside the classroom.

Scientific Concept: knowledge acquired in content areas academic knowledge, also known as schooled knowledge.

Whole Language: is the belief that individuals learn a language (both oral and written forms) by using it, not by learning and practicing its separate parts. (Goodman, 1986; Edelesky & Flores, 1991)

Organization of the Project

This project was divided into five chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction to the context of the problem, purpose of the project, and significance of the project, limitations and definitions of terms. Chapter Two consists of a review of relevant literature in the following areas literacy, phonemic awareness, whole language instruction, reading and writing. Chapter Three documents the design and methodology used in developing the project. Chapter Four of this project presents the results and discussion regarding students' achievement based on trimester district's assessments in the areas of reading and

writing. Chapter Five presents conclusions and recommendations drawn from the development of the project. Project references follow Chapter Five. The Appendices for the project consists of: Appendix A STUDENTS' WRITING SAMPLES; Appendix B INTERACTIVE WRITING LOS TRES COCHINITOS; Appendix C INTERACTIVE WRITING LOS TRES CERDITOS; Appendix D INTERACTIVE WRITING VENN DIAGRAM; Appendix E INSTRUMENT FOR MEDIATING INSTRUCTION. Finally, the Project references.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

American classrooms have been widely criticized for their low academic achievement in literacy, reading and writing. The issue concerning the nature of reading is whether it is a matter of constructing meaning or decoding to sounds Smith (1999). The fact is that the whole purpose of reading is comprehension, in other words, to make sense of written language, and sense is made of written language directly, not by converting it into sounds.

In fact, in the English language often we cannot say what a written word means until we have identified its meaning. For example the word read should be pronounce "reed" or "red" but its pronunciation cannot be identify unless its meaning has been determined from its context. The following sentence will demonstrate what I mean by identifying the meaning of a word within context. Would you like to read the book I read yesterday? Smith (1985).

The controversies, in the issue of low academic achievement in literacy, lie on the excessive teaching of phonics in isolation or out of context. Using phonics in

isolation or as the main tool for teaching children to read and write is a mistake. Using phonics to teach children reading and writing should be a tool or a strategy to aid students in their reading and writing of difficult words or unknown words, but it should not be used as the only system to teaching reading and writing.

In this chapter I will review research on the process of reading and writing and what happens as children become proficient readers and writers. I will investigate the power that mediating instruction, authentic literature, and a combination of whole language and phonics strategies have in teaching successful reading and writing skills. I believe that teaching my students to read and write in response to authentic literature, and teaching them strategies with whole language and phonics instruction will help my students become confident and independent readers and writers. In my opinion, at the beginning of the primary grades, it is important to teach our students the reading and writing process, and it is important to teach them to write in connection to literature and spoken language.

Phonics and Whole Language Based Instruction

There is an ongoing debate among educators and researchers in education regarding the issue of explicit whole language instruction and explicit phonics instruction in American classrooms. According to research on literacy development, reading and writing, Spanish-speaking children across the United States receive more skill-based instruction, phonics instruction, than do English-speaking children. As a consequence, these students are rarely asked to think critically and do not reach their full potential in literacy, reading comprehension and writing, and they are always playing catching up (Cummins, 1989; Diaz, Moll, & Mehan, 1990; Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education, 1989; Peers, 1992; Thins, 1989; Weaver & Pardon, 1992).

Kuball and Peck (1993) also investigated the effects of whole language-based instruction on the writing development of Spanish-speaking kindergartners and English-speaking kindergartners. In their study, they discovered that children learn their writing skills through literature based instruction. In this kindergarten classroom, the teacher modeled reading and writing activities on a daily basis. Recipes, songs,

stories, and daily news were charted in front of the students. Child-dictated stories were transcribed by the teacher, and when writing these stories the teacher pointed out specific skills she wanted the students to focus on (i.e., sight words, graph-phonemic relationships, syntax, etc.) Thus, writing skills were presented to the students within context, or authentic writing, and not through workbook exercises. At the end of the year, Kuball and Peck's investigation showed that teaching children phonics in isolation does not necessarily mean that they will apply the generalizations from phonics lessons to their writing. However, their study also shows that 25% of the Spanish speaking students who received Whole Language instruction advanced to stage 4 of the writing process. The other 75% only advanced to stage 3. They discovered that, since the Spanish language is more grapho-phonically regular than English, 75% of the Spanish subjects did not receive enough phonics instruction within the Whole Language based instruction to enable them to reach stage 4 in the writing process.

Goodman (1987) urges teachers to become empowered, to take charge of their classrooms, and to use phonics instruction properly. Goodman (1986) tells us that writing development flourishes when Whole Language based

instruction is provided. In this approach, writing is considered a meaningful form of communication and not a set of learning skills. He also emphasized his ideal that students should be encouraged to write for authentic purposes. In other words, when students write for their journal or any other writing assignment, their writing has to have purpose and meaning to them.

Teaching explicit-strategies for specific content areas is important in grades sixth to twelfth. However, at the primary grade levels, such it is the case in kindergarten to third grade, teaching explicit strategies for tasks such as learning to read and write spelling words and memorization of spelling words is erroneous because, at these grade levels, our students need to be able to use contextual clues in order to understand the meaning of words. Teaching lists of words in isolation does not guarantee that students will memorize these words. Instruction in tasks such as in spelling words can be effectively integrated with Whole Language instruction for young students. Teaching explicit strategy instruction in a Whole Language environment results in better spelling performance than does either using Whole Language or explicit strategy instruction alone, (Thomas, J., and Woloshyn, V., 1997). In addition, teaching

spelling strategies using a combined method of Whole Language instruction and explicit strategy instruction allow students to target these spelling words in the context of stories. These combined strategies will allow students to target these spelling words as they complete meaningful reading and writing activities.

Eldredge J. and Baird J., E. (1996) conducted a study in which their goal was to demonstrate that using phonemic awareness training to teach first graders how to write will be more effective than to use a combination of phonemic awareness and Whole Language instruction for the same purpose. Their findings indicate that the writing samples of children using the combined methodology, phonics and Whole Language, were superior to the writing samples of children who used only the Whole Language method on all pre-selected writing and spelling criteria: the number of words written, the number of different words written, the number of low frequency or difficult words written, the number of communication units written, the number of words spelled correctly, the number of different words spelled correctly, and the overall quality of the written composition. They concluded that phonemic instruction, when done properly, will enhance the

effectiveness of the holistic writing approach used with young children.

My experience in the classroom has helped me understand that students have different academic needs, as well as different emotional and psychological needs. Therefore, teachers need to organize differentiating instruction in order to meet the needs of every student in their classroom. To be realistic, as teachers we cannot organize instruction or organize time to take each individual student to the side and work with that student on his/her specific needs. However, as teachers, it is our responsibility to organize instruction for every one of our students and we can do this by taking into consideration the needs of everyone of our students as we organize our daily instructional plan. For these reasons, I have concluded that by using the combined methods of phonics instruction and whole language instruction strategies, to teach reading and writing in my classroom, I will be able attend to the individual needs of my students. These type of instructional strategies help teachers use a variety of techniques as they deliver instruction to the students. Furthermore, this type of instruction allows students to take an active role in

their learning because students are active participants and not just passive receivers of instruction.

Whole language proponents and many whole language teachers oppose traditional phonics instruction because it appears to be artificial, torturous and non-meaningful. However, it is crucial that the classroom teacher have the skills to help students with different learning styles learn to read and write. Kenneth, M. (1995) suggests that using a combination of whole language instruction and phonics instruction, also known as the integration model, to teach reading can have positive affects in meeting students individual needs in reading and writing.

Escamilla, K. (2000) conducted a year long study on literacy teaching and learning in two kindergarten classrooms in a school considered at-risk and inadequate by the state. The purpose of this study was to build from the knowledge base of studies on children's literacy development in at-risk schools and to provide a yearlong view of this development and instruction. The major goals of this study was to describe the children's literacy development and the instruction they received, to understand how children in such circumstances develop in literacy, and to examined how teacher supported children in acquiring this knowledge.

She discovered that the most common characteristic of teaching and learning in these kindergartens was the focus on letter recognition and the sounds of the letters. The majority of time spend in instruction was centered on related activities. Teaching letter sound recognition and knowledge is essential to future academic achievement. However, the kindergarten teacher isolated this instruction from meaningful connection to text and spent most of the instructional time on letter learning. As a result, 11 of these 15 children did not leave kindergarten reading and writing. These children had little opportunity to experiment with print in any meaningful way. Their writing experience was limited to copying words or they were helped with spelling on most occasions. Having few opportunities to experiment with print in any meaningful way, it is not surprising that these students' reading and writing skills as well as their phonemic awareness skills were limited at the end of the year.

The results of this study show that children became competent at coloring but not proficient at understanding much about reading and writing. The majority of the children in this study were moved into first grade with limited understanding on reading and writing. Only 4 of the 15 focal students developed into beginning readers by

the end of the school year. The other 11 children were beginning to develop the more formal understanding of literacy that children most frequently learn in school. Teaching phonics in isolation and out of context does not work because students do not have the opportunity to use their prior knowledge to make sense of the new knowledge. For most students, phonics in isolation does not make sense because alone, phonics has no real meaning and students have no meaningful use for phonics in isolation.

Kuball and Peck (1995) emphasized the fact that children learned through literature not through work books exercises and worksheet exercises alone. They also tells us that the classroom learning environment, in which students learned, needs to be that in which young children learn to speak, walk, and socialize. It needs to be a natural and safe learning environment.

Taking into consideration the results found in prior research in the subject of whole language and phonics instruction, it is important that teachers understand that by combining the Whole Language pedagogy and the phonemic approach to teaching reading and writing, within the context of literature, we can teach our students reliable learning strategies that they can use to conquer the

obstacles they might encounter in their journey to become successful readers and writers.

Review of Literature in Reading and Writing

The ability to read and write provides a critical foundation for students' future academic achievement. These abilities increase the likelihood that students will read and thus acquire academic knowledge across curriculum and in a multitude of domains (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998). As teachers when we read new instructional materials or other literature that is of interests to us, we acquired new knowledge as well as new vocabulary. The same is true for our students. When our students become literate, proficient readers and writers, they too have the opportunity to increase their vocabulary and to develop their ability to read complex text critically (Allington, 1984).

Researchers on literacy development have come to the conclusion that literacy proficiency is important for students' academic achievement and overall success. Thus it is essential that teachers understand the importance of literacy teaching and learning at the kindergarten level and through the first and second grade. Literacy development at grade levels k to 2nd is important because

students have the opportunity to develop a strong foundation on reading and writing which will help them to become proficient readers and writers.

Adams, 1990; and Torgeson & Davis, 1996; had detailed the literacy knowledge that is important to achievement during the early school years. According to these researchers, the literacy instruction and knowledge that begin at the school entry level should be composed of the following: Phonological sensitivity, the ability to match sound of symbols, identify rhyming words, letter sound correspondence, and beginning, middle and ending sounds in words. In addition, at the kindergarten level the ability to engage in invented spelling during journal writing, the vocabulary size of the student, and the understanding of spoken language are also strong predictors of students' future achievement.

Summary

To conclude, the research presented above clearly demonstrates the importance of literacy teaching and learning during the early school years. It also shows that in order for students' to achieve a high level of proficiency in literacy, reading and writing, it is important that the teacher, as a sociocultural mediator of

instruction, has the pedagogical knowledge to facilitate children's literacy development and learning.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this project is to describe how the teacher, as sociocultural mediator of instruction, can use whole group interactive reading and writing activities, in a whole group interactive setting, to help kindergarten students understand the connection between oral language and written language, using a combined method of Whole Language pedagogy and phonic instruction strategies.

For the purpose of this project I have chosen to follow 20 kindergarten students, in a year-round school through the academic year 2001/2002, beginning their formal instruction in July 2001 and ending on June 26, 2002, as they become readers and writers in their primary language, Spanish. I have chosen to perform this investigation in a contemporary kindergarten bilingual classroom, my kindergarten classroom, because I feel that it is at this grade level that students are introduced to the "scientific concept" of formal learning, in this case learning to read and write in their primary language, Spanish.

Methods for Collecting Data

A taped recorder was used in order to record students active participation during the whole group interactive reading and writing activities. The recorded information was transcribed and analyzed in order to verify that all of the students were active participants during instruction, and to assess their understanding of story elements during the discussion portion of the session. Furthermore, because of this transcripts, I was able to assess the students participation during the discussion of the literature, as well as their participation, oral participation, during the interactive writing portion of this assignment. (See language arts lesson week one, two, and three.)

A three week lesson plan has been designed in order to describe the structure used in my classroom during the language arts portion of the day. In addition I am providing the regular class scheduled used in a half day kindergarten class. This is the scheduled used in my classroom for everyday activities. Furthermore, I am providing a sample of the kindergarten writing rubric which is use in our district to grade students written samples. In addition, I am providing students writing

samples, individual samples, which had been scored using the writing criteria from this rubric. I am enclosing students interactive writing samples which have been developed during the process of these lessons. In these interactive written samples students were able to identify the elements of these two stories. They were able to compare and contrast similarities and differences in these stories using a Venn diagram, and they were able to write their own understanding of the stories, using the literature previewed during these three weeks lesson. Additionally, I am using students end of the year reading assessment results to assess students proficiency in reading, and reading comprehension. (See tables on pages 66,67 of this project)

Program Plan

Throughout this study, I will analyze the impact that interactive reading and writing activities have in helping students understand the connection between oral language and written language, as it applies to the writing process in a bilingual kindergarten classroom or SEI classroom. Furthermore, I will describe and explain my methods of instruction using a combination of phonics and whole language instruction strategies, within the context of

literature, during whole group interactive reading and writing activities.

Writing Assessment

In order to assess students' writing proficiency, I will use RUSD writing rubric for kindergarten. I will use this rubric to grade students' written samples, using the same ruling for each sample. I will show students' written samples that are scored on the writing rubric from 1 to 4.

According to RUSD kindergarten writing rubric, when a writing sample receives a score of one it means that the writer was apparently able to tell his/her teacher a complex and complete sentence but represented that thought in writing by copying a string of letters not related to knowledge of letters or sound. A paper like this is representative of score one which is consider "below basic" for 1st trimester assessment.

A writing sample that achieves a score of two means that the sample contains evidence of directionality and spacing between words. The writer has applied knowledge of beginning and medial sound to represent the words written in a sentence. A paper that receives a score of two is considered "proficient" for 1st trimester assessment, but

it is consider "below basic" for the 3rd trimester or end of the year assessment.

When a written sample receives a score of three it indicates that the student is able to write a simple sentence. All letters are formed correctly, high frequency words are spelled correctly, and spacing and directionality are appropriately used. A paper that receives a score of three is considered "proficient" for 1st trimester assessment, and it is also consider "proficient" for the 3rd trimester or end of the year assessment.

Finally, when a students written sample obtains a score of four, which is the top score, it means that this written sample displays the characteristic of a proficient piece of kindergarten writing. The paper contains greater complexity in meaning than a typical score of three. Grade level high frequency words are spelled correctly, proper punctuation is noticeable at the end of a sentence and prepositional phases have been used and clearly identify by the student. A paper that receives a score of four is considered "advanced" for 1st trimester assessment, and 3rd trimester or end of the year assessment. (To obtain a broader explanation of the writing criteria see appendix A).

In order to demonstrate that my students have become literate, readers and writers, by using the combined methodology of Whole Language and Phonics Instruction, I will use Riverside Unified School District's Developmental Reading Assessment method (DRA) or running records methods to assess students' independent reading abilities and their reading comprehension level, according to district standards and benchmarks. In kindergarten, this assessment is use only during the third trimester assessment or end of the year assessment. In addition, in the findings portion of this project, I will include a final graph to show students reading results. The final objective for this assessment is to help the teacher determined student's reading ability and their reading comprehension level at the end kindergarten.

Development

Daily Schedule

7:45 to 8:10

Opening Activities. Attendance, lunch count, math calendar, phonemic awareness with letter of the week and syllable of the week, spelling words/usage, word segmentation and flag salute.

8:10 to 8:40

Reading and Writing. Whole group instruction, model reading and writing aloud, and interactive reading and writing activities.

8:40 to 9:00

Journal Writing

9:00 to 9:30

Language Art Stations. Green group, guided reading. Yellow group, guided writing. Red group and blue group, which are independent centers, will be working on assignment related to letter and syllable of the week, and/or reading comprehension activities. Note: centers rotate throughout the week, Monday through Thursday.

9:30 to 10:00

English Language Development. English Language Development, which means that at this portion of the day students learn English as a second language.

10:00 to 10:15

Recess

10:15 to 10:45

Lunch

10:45 to 11:00

Mathematics. Using a mini-lesson, teacher explains math objective and describes and models math activity for the day.

11:00 to 11:30

Math/Science. This is the portion of the day in which guided instruction in mathematics and/or science takes place.

11:30 to 11:40

Math Assessment. At the end of the math period, I always assess my students in order to verify that they have understood and learned the math objective for that day.

11:40 to 11:57

Closing Activities. This is the portion of the day that I use to explain homework and to have students clean up the classroom before they go home for the day.

Methods of Instruction
Whole Group Setting

Week One/Day One

8:10 to 8:40

Reading Aloud. Each week as I introduced a new book to my class, I always begin my lesson by assessing the students' spontaneous concepts about the book. For this

week I have chosen to read the book title "Los Tres Cochinitos" by Sally Bell and J. Ellen Dolce. First I begin my lesson by showing the book's cover to the students and ask them to describe what they see on the cover. Next, I read the title of the book and show the two picture before the title page. Then I begin my questioning by asking: by looking at the cover of this book and listening to the title, what do you guys think this book is about? [De qué se va a tartar este libro?] What do you think we are going to find when we begin reading this story? [Qué piensan ustedes qué vamos a encontrar en éste libro cuando empecemos a leer la historia?] As students begin to raise their hand to answer my questions, I move to the next step on my lesson, model writing and writing aloud.

Model Writing Activity. Using chart paper, I write students predictions to the story. At this point children begin to raise their hand and I choose students to give me their version of the story. The first student I chose was Nancy and she told me that she though that this story was about three little pigs that were playing "A la Rueda de San Miquel," which is a popular children rhyming song and game in Mexico, and we have played this game in our classroom previously. Furthermore, in the book's cover

page there is a picture that shows the three little pigs joining hands and forming a circle.

The second child, Gerardo, told me that the story is about three little pigs that are going on a trip. He says that when he goes on a trip to play baseball with his dad, he always carries a backpack, mochila, with some clothing just in case he gets dirty. ["Maestra cuando yo voy a un paseo a jugar baseball con mi papi yo también me llevo mi mochila con ropa extra por si me lleno de tierra cuando juego."] Again, in the third picture, before the title page, we see the three little pigs carrying their personal items in three different types of bags and one of them is a backpack.

Another child, Javier, told me that the three little pigs are going to Mexico to visit their grandparents and their mom is very sad because she can't go to Mexico with them because she has to work. Javier says, ["Yo voy a México a visitar a mis abuelitos en Navidad asi como los tres cochinitos."]

Before I begin to write on the chart paper, I first confirmed all of the students answers by restating them in the format of a question. For instance, I restated the first answer by saying to Nancy, so, do you think that the three little pigs are playing a la rueda de San Miquel?

She said yes. Then, I begin writing on the chart paper and I say each word out loud as I write it down. I said, [Los tres cochinitos están jugando a la rueda de San Miquel.] Before I begin to write the first word, I ask my students to tell me if the first letter I need to write, in this case "l" in "los", is lower or upper case, mayúscula o minúscula. I also remind them that the letter "l" will be the first letter in this sentence. They said mayúscula maestra, [la L grandota maestra.] I emphasize the fact that they are correct by saying, "good the first letter in a sentence is always an upper case, mayúscula." Notice that I did not say the first letter is a big /L/ because, even though both answers are correct, as the teacher, I need to model proper terminology to my students.

As I continue writing each word in the sentences that were given to me by these students, I ask the students to help me spell the words. I ask, how do we spell "los"? They say una /L/ mayúscula, una /o/ y una /s/ maestra. Then I say the word out loud, Los, /L/o/s/, and I write each sound as it comes out of my mouth. I am modeling letter sound correspondence as well as the connection between oral language and written language. I continue this process and I write "tre", instead of "tres"; then, I

ask students to read this word with me following Mrs. Ross' reading finger. They read "tre" then, before I even say anything, Jesus raises his hand and says ["maestra necesita una "s" al final".] Teacher you need to write an "s" at the end of the word. I continue this process by saying out loud each word in a sentence, as I write down each sentence. I always write aloud when modeling the writing process. Furthermore, I always encourage my students to help me spell the words as they hear me saying them. I listen to their spelling of the words and I write down what they say. Some time when they are incorrect in spelling a word I still write it down. Then, we will read the word together and decide if the spelling of that specific word makes sense.

For each of the children's answers that I need to write I use the same strategy. I write the complete sentence first. Then pointing to each word in the sentence with my finger, I ask the children to read the words out loud following Mrs. Ross' finger. Furthermore, I always tell students to listen to Mrs. Ross' mouth and notice how when Mrs. Ross writes a word she always says the word out loud and writes the sounds that come out of her mouth to form the word. [Cuando yo empieso a escribir, yo siempre les digo a mis estudiantes que miren y escuchen la boca de

Mrs. Ross y que se den cuenta que Mrs. Ross siempre dice la palabra con su boca antes de escribirla y ella siempre escribe los sonidos que le salen de su boca para poder escribir la palabra completa.]

I use the same writing aloud strategies through out the model writing part of the lesson. In addition, I praise my students during independent writing if I see them or hear them saying out loud the words as they write the sentence in their journal. Also, when they read their journal back to me, I ask them to use their magic finger and read with it. ["Yo necesito que usen su dedo mágico para que me lean su escritura."] I do this to assess children zone of proximal development (ZOPD) in their writing and to assess their knowledge of words boundaries and letter sound correspondence, in this case syllable sound correspondence, as well as their tracking and directionality in reading.

It is important to understand that all of the answers that were given to me by the children, regarding their prediction to the story, were accurate with regards to their prior knowledge. They analyzed the pictures on the book's cover and in the title page and use their prior knowledge to make sense of the book's illustrations. In addition, it is important to emphasize the fact that by

using the writing aloud strategy, to model the writing process to my students, I am modeling formal writing procedures to my students. I am demonstrating left to right, letter sound correspondence, top to bottom and word boundaries. I am also showing to them the relationship between written language and spoken language by emphasizing the fact that I need to say the words out loud before I write them down on the paper. By mediating instruction to my students through the use of these strategies I am modeling formal writing procedures to my class and I am using a combination of whole language and phonics instruction to achieve my main objective, which is students independent writing.

8:40 to 9:00

Independent Writing. During journal writing, students are asked to write what they think the story is going to be about. NOTE: Teacher leaves the book, that is to be read, showing the cover so children can use the pictures on the cover to write their own prediction to the story.

Teacher as Mediator. As mediator of instruction, it is important that the teacher always give an example of what the students need to do. For example I always tell my

students, [Yo pienso que este cuento se va a tratar de. . . .etc.] Next, I will take the first three examples from the students before dismissing them to their assignment. At this point students will write in their journal their personal prediction to the story. After students finished writing their prediction of the story they are encouraged to remain at their table and raise their hand as they finished their assignment. Then the teacher will acknowledge each student who has completed the assignment by visiting his/her table and asking him/her to read their journal writing to the teacher. First, teacher asks each individual student to read what he/she had written on the page, using their magic finger. Teacher orally comments on the child's writing, a positive comment. Then she writes out loud what the student said he or she wrote. By doing this type of interactive instruction, the teacher serves as a mediator between the child current level of knowledge and his/her ZOPD in the writing process, which is formal writing. During independent journal writing the teacher only writes in the student's journal when the student's writing is not understandable. When the student's writing is readable by others, the teacher only verbally comments on the student's work and grades it. This is the process use by the teacher in all journal writing activities.

Day Two

8:10 to 8:40

Reading Aloud. At this time, before reading the text for the first time, I am going to explain the first two elements of the story to my students, character and setting. I begin by asking, who knows what a character is in a story? [Quién sabe que es un personaje en una historia?] I had some students raised their hand, but they did not give me the right answer. Then I said, let's pretend that everyday in this classroom we create a story.

We are going to call our story, ["Los Alumnos Traviesos en la Clase de la Maestra Ross".] "The Little Rascals in Mrs. Ross' Class". Therefore, for the purpose of this story, everyone in this classroom is a character. [En esta historia cada uno de ustedes es un personaje.] They laugh and say "cool". I say, in our story we have the following characters Rene, Saira, Gerardo, Luz, Joseph, Nancy, Guadalupe, Michelle, Mark, Javier, Eusebio, Hector, Oscar, Alonso, Destiny, Vanessa, Erick, Jesus, Angel, etc. I do call the names of everyone in my classroom in order to give my explanation of characters a touch of reality. Also, I use our daily tasks such as journal writing, Math, ELD. etc., as the different plots in our story and I

explained to them that as the characters in this story we have to conquer these tasks.

After I finish explaining the role of a character in a story, I explain the setting. Even though I won't introduce setting until the next day, for the purpose of this instruction, I need to show the relationship that exists between the characters' actions and the place where these actions take place, the setting. For the explanation of setting I use our classroom because it is in our classroom that all of our daily activities take place. Once I feel that my students understand the definitions of character and setting, I continue with the next step of my lesson, the actual reading of the story.

Before I begin reading the story for the first time, I tell my students that they need to pay careful attention to the story because after the reading they are going to describe the character or characters in the story. I tell them that for the interactive writing portion of the assignment I will choose those students who are paying attention to the story. The chosen student then will come to the front and write about the character or characters on the chart paper. Furthermore, I will inform them that they are going to write in their journal about their favorite character and why they chose that character.

Next I will begin reading the story, "Los Tres Cochinito". After reading the story, students and teacher check the accuracy of the children's prediction to the story, which were written the day before. We do this by reading the prediction as a whole class, interactive reading. Next we will talk about the story and we will analyze the predictions. Then interactively and using the four squares writing system, we will identify and describe the characters of the story. As we do this activity all of the students in the class are active participant in this task. When one student is writing on the chart paper the other students are telling the writer what he/she needs to write about; they are spelling the words out loud; they are sounding out words; they are showing the space between the words, word boundaries, by using the space between their fingers.

Since the Spanish language is more syllabic than the English language, for the purpose of demonstrating the writing process to my students, I use the fingers in one of my hands to represent the words in a sentence. I use my non writing hand for this activity. Each finger in my hand represents a word and every space between my fingers represent the space between the words, see appendix E. I

do this form of mediating instruction for every writing assignment that takes place in my classroom.

8:40 to 9:00

Journal Writing. During journal time, independent journal writing, students are asked to describe their favorite character in the story. At this time I put away our interactive writing sample so students don't feel tempted to copy their description of the character from the chart. Furthermore, I will remind the students that they need to sound out each word out loud while writing their description of the character. I tell them that they need to write the sound that come out of their mouth as they say the word they want to write on their sentence. I will also remind them to use their fingers so they can place a space at the end of each word, word boundaries. Then when they finish with their journal writing, I will ask them to read their journal to me. Same procedure will follow as in day one during independent journal writing.

Remember that the teacher is always the mediator of instruction in his/her classroom. Refer to teacher as mediator of instruction on day one, during independent journal writing for review of this process.

Day Three

8:10 to 8:40

Reading/Writing Aloud. At this time we will revisit the text, "Los Tres Cochinitos". We will review the characters in the story, who they are and what they did. Then I will focus students' attention on the second element of the story, the setting. I will explain what a setting is. I will remind them of our story, ["Los Alumnos Traviesos en la Clase de la Maestra Ross".] I will say, "Here in our classroom we are the characters of our kindergarten story and our classroom is our setting because everything we do during the day it happens here". Next I will remind them that they need to pay attention to the reading so they can identify and describe the area where the story takes place, the setting. Please remember that, as the teacher, it is your responsibility to explain story elements to your students first so they can understand and make sense of the terminology you are using during this lesson.

After the reading of the story, I will ask students to tell me where the story took place. Then, as students give me the information identifying and describing the setting, I will chose students to come forward, and interactively, they will write and describe the setting

part of the story. We will write this information on chart paper, using the four squares writing system to describe this element of the story. Again, as we do this activity, all of the students in the class are active participant in this task. When one student is at front writing on the chart paper, the other students are telling the writer what he/she needs to write about; they are spelling the words out loud; they are sounding out words, and they are showing the space between the words or word boundaries by using the space between their fingers.

8:40 to 9:00

Journal Writing. During journal time, independent journal writing, students are asked to describe the setting part of the story and what happened at this point in the story. At this time I put away our interactive writing sample so students don't feel tempted to copy their description of the setting from the chart. Then, I will remind them to sound out each word out loud while writing their description of the setting. I will also remind them to use their fingers so they can place a space at the end of each word, word boundaries. Then when they finish with their journal writing, I will ask them to read their journal to me, using their magic finger. I will write down on each individual journal what the student

tells me he/she wrote in their journal and I will say each word out loud as I write it down. Again, the purpose for doing this activity is to model conventional writing to my students and to serve as mediator between the students actual level of writing, where they are at this point in the year, and their zone of proximal development in the content of writing, which is conventional writing.

Day Four

8:10 to 8:40

Reading Aloud. At this time we will revisit the text "Los Tres Cochinitos". I will review the elements of the story previously learned. Using the interactive writing on the chart, as a whole class, we will read the description of the elements of the story, whole class interactive reading. After the interactive reading of story element, I will focus students attention on the story's problem. I will explain what a problem is by using some examples that involve the students in the class. For instance, I will ask, when someone in this classroom breaks the classroom's rules what will happen? Luz raises her hand and she says, ["Si alguien ignora las reglas del salón ése estudiante pierde 5 minutos de su descanso. Como les pasa a Oscar y a Rene maestra cuándo ellos no se portan bien en el salón".] Luz says, "if someone ignores the classroom's rules that

student will lose 5 minutes of his/her recess. She then continues by saying, "like it happens to Oscar and Rene when they don't behave in the classroom. Once I know that they understand what a problem is, I will focus their attention in the story's plot or problem by informing them that they are going to be responsible for explaining to me the problem in the story and why was it a problem.

After the reading, I ask students to describe the plot or problem in the story. As students give me the information that identifies and describes the problem in the story, I will choose students to come forward and, interactively, they will write a description identifying what the problem was in the story and what happened. Again, as we do this activity all of the students in the class are active participants in this task. When one student is at front writing on the chart paper, the other students are telling the writer what he/she needs to write about; they are spelling the words out loud; they are sounding out words; they are showing the space between the words or word boundaries by using the space between their fingers.

8:40 to 9:00

Journal Writing. During journal time, independent journal writing, students are asked to identify and

describe the problem part of the story and what happened at this point in the story. Again, at this time, I put away our interactive writing sample so students don't feel tempted to copy their description of the story's problem from the chart. Then, I will remind them to sound out each word out loud while writing their description of the problem. I will also remind them to use their fingers so they can place a space at the end of each word, word boundaries. Then, when they finish with their journal writing, I will ask them to read their journal to me, using their magic finger. I will write down on each individual journal what the student tells me he/she wrote in their journal and I will say each word out loud as I write it down. Again, for me this is just another opportunity to assess my students zone of proximal development in writing, conventional writing, as well as their individual skills in analyzes of literature.

Day Five

8:10 to 8:40

Reading Aloud. We will revisit the story "Los Tres Cochinitos" for the last time. I will review the elements of the story to the students. Then, I will focus students' attention on the solution. I will explain what a problem is and how we always try to find a solution to solve our

problems. I will use the same example of the classroom's rules to review what a problem is. Then I will explain that behaving and obeying our classroom's rules is the perfect solution for not losing their recess, which is the solution to the problem. Next, I will ask them to pay careful attention to the reading. I will explain that after I finish reading the story they are going to come to the front and, writing on the chart paper, they are going to explain to me the solution to the problem in the story, how we can identify the solution to the problem, and what happen during this part of the story.

Interactive Writing. After the reading, I will ask students to explain the problem in the story and how the problem was solved. As students give me the information that identifies and describes the problem and solution to the problem in the story, I will chose a student to come forward and he/she will begin writing the students' answers on the chart paper.

As we do this activity all of the students in the class are active participants in this task. When one student is at front writing on the chart paper, the other students are telling the writer what he/she needs to write about; they are spelling the words out loud; they are sounding out words; they are showing the space between the

words or word boundaries by using the space between their fingers. It is important to understand that I choose different students for the interactive writing portion of this assignment. During the interactive writing portion of this task, students take turns writing on the chart paper. They all work cooperatively and they raise their hand and volunteer to come forward and take turns writing.

8:40 to 9:00

Journal Writing. During journal time students will be ask to identify and describe the problem and the solution of the problem in their independent journal. Again, when they finish, I will ask them to read their journal to me, one by one, using their magic finger. Then I will write aloud the student's reading of his or her journal. I will write in the student's journal only if his/her writing is difficult to read by others. For my teaching purposes, this is my opportunity to assess my students zone of proximal development in writing and in reading, as well as my opportunity to assess my students understanding of literature analysis, which will be the scientific concept of instruction in our class for the next three weeks.

It is important to notice that the journal writing activity always follows the model writing activity and

students are asked to describe the same element of the story. It is also important to notice that students are not allow to copy from the group's writing, interactive writing, of the story elements. During journal writing each student does his/her own thinking in describing and analyzing the story elements. See appendix B, C and D for interactive writing samples.

Week Two

For the second week of this instructional plan we analyzed the elements of the story, "LA VERDADERA HISTORIA DE LOS TRES CERDITOS" by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. The format that we used to analyze the elements of the story "Los Tres Cochinitos" by J. Ellen Dolce and Ivan Vazquez Rodriguez, was used to analyze the elements of "LA VERDADERA HISTORIA DE LOS TRES CERDITOS." In addition, we followed the same procedures as we did in the first week of instruction during the interactive writing and the independent writing portion of our lesson. Furthermore, at the end of week two, after we finish analyzing the elements of the story "LA VERDADERA HISTORIA DE LOS TRES CERDITOS," I used the information we collected while analyzing the elements of these stories to create a Venn diagram. During our interactive writing activities in

week three, we used the Venn diagram to analyze compared and contrast similarities and differences between both of these stories. In addition, I used the information collected from these stories to help my students write their own version of the story. I organized this activity in order to demonstrate the writing process to my students, using a paragraph format.

Language Arts Lesson

Week Two/Day One

8:10 to 8:40

Reading Aloud. As mentioned in week one, each week as I introduced a new book to my class I always begin my lesson by assessing the students' spontaneous concept about the book. For this week I chose to read the book title "LA VERDADERA HISTORIA DE LOS TRES CERDITOS" by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith. First I begin my lesson by showing the book's cover to the students and ask them to describe what they see on the cover. Next I read the title of the book to the students and I show them the pictures on the first page. Then I begin my questioning by asking: by looking at the cover of this book and listening to the title, what do you guys think this book is about? [De qué se va a tartar éste libro?] What do you think we are going

to find when we begin reading this story? [Qué piensan ustedes que vamos a encontrar en este libro cuando empecemos a leer la historia?] As students begin to raise their hands to answer my questions, I move to the next step on my lesson, model writing and writing out loud.

Writing Aloud. Using chart paper I write students prediction to this week's story. At this point children begin to raise their hand and I choose students to give me their version of the story. The first student I chose was Guadalupe. She told me that she thought that this story was about the three little pigs again. Good, I said, "Who do you think is telling the story at this time?" Students were not sure on how to answer my question, so I decided to explain point of view. I told my students that some times stories change according to the individual who tells the story. For instance, I said, if Eusebio takes the eraser away from you, you might tell me that Eusebio took the eraser away from you. However, Eusebio might tell me that he borrowed the eraser from you. Do you see that the way you told me what happened is different from the way Eusebio told me what happened. This is because each of you has different points of view of how things happened. The same happens in storytelling. The events of a story can change according to the storyteller or narrator. In this

case, the narrator or individual who is telling the story to us is the wolf, Silvester A. Wolf. In the first story the narrators were the three little pigs and they told the story to us from their point of view.

After I explained point of view to my students, I move to the beginning of the lesson. For the second week's lesson, I followed the same procedures as I did in the first week of instruction. I followed the same procedures during the reading out loud, model reading, interactive writing and the independent writing portion of the lesson.

Week Three

During week three we are using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the elements of both of these stories. During this process, using interactive writing activities, we identified and describe the differences and similarities in the stories. We broke down this activity as follow:

Monday (Characters)

On Monday we reviewed the information we already had that described the characters of both stories. Then we analyzed the differences and similarities in both stories, in regards to the story elements. Next, we plug the information in the appropriate section of our Venn diagram

and we discussed why we chose this information. For instance, when we were analyzing the character portion of both stories, my students identify that in story #1, Los Tres Cochinitos, the three little pigs had a mom, but in story #2, LA VERDADERA HISTORIA DE LOS TRES CERDITOS, the three cerditos or little pigs did not have a mom. My students also discovered that in story #2 we had the policeman who arrested the wolf, el lobo. However, we did not have policemen in story #1. So there were two differences in the character portion of these stories.

Tuesday (Setting)

On Tuesday we discussed and analyzed the differences and similarities of the setting in both stories. We discovered that in both stories the little pigs had three little houses, one for each of them. One house was made of hay, one was made of sticks and the last one was made of bricks. So we found that the setting part of the story was pretty similar in both stories.

Wednesday (Problem)

On Wednesday we discussed and analyzed the differences and similarities of the plot, problem or [problema] of both of these stories. We discovered that in story #1 the wolf blew up the houses of the first two little pigs. However, he did not eat the little pigs. In

story #2 the wolf blew up the houses of the first two little pigs also; however, in story #2 the wolf did eat the two little pigs. So we discovered a difference in the problem part of these stories.

Thursday (Solution)

On Thursday we discussed and analyzed the differences and similarities of this element, solution, in both stories. We discover that in story #1 the two little pigs learned their lesson, and at the end of the story their new homes were also made of bricks, just like the home of their older and wiser brother. In story #2 however, we discovered that the story had a sad ending for everyone. First in story #2 the wolf did eat the two little pigs and, as a result, the wolf was arrested and put in jail. So we did not encounter a happy ending in story #2. Thus, we discovered a difference in the outcome or solution between these two stories.

Note: please see appendix B, C and D for students' interactive writing samples. These examples will help you to acquire a better understanding of this lesson. Also, it is important to remember that we were using our prior work on these two stories to create this activity, Venn diagram activity. Therefore, students needed to read the prior work in order to be able to analyzed, compared and

contrast these two stories. My students were not only doing interactive writing but they were also doing interactive reading during the process of this lesson.

Project's Design

The design used in this project is a comparative design. I used this design in order to analyzed and compare students progress, academic progress made throughout the school year in the areas of reading and writing.

Population Served

As mentioned in chapter three, for this project I chose to follow 20 kindergarten students, in a year-round school through the academic year 2001/2002, beginning their formal instruction in July 2001 and ending on June 26, 2002, as they become readers and writers in their primary language, Spanish.

Data Analysis Procedures

As mentioned before, in order to assess students' writing proficiency I used RUSD writing rubric for kindergarten, in order to grade student's written samples. The writing rubric used to analyze this data gives scores from 1 to 4 to grade students' papers. For the

kindergarten rubric a score of one is considered the lowest score and a score of 4 is considered the top score.

In addition, I used RUSD DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) assessment method or running records methods to assess students' independent reading abilities and their reading comprehension level at the end of their kindergarten year, according to district standards and benchmarks. It is important to address that the writing rubric is used throughout the year and especially during the first, second and third trimester district's assessments. On the other hand, the reading assessment for kindergarten is only done during the third trimester assessment or end of the year assessment. Please see presentation of findings to see a graphic representation of these assessments.

Summary

In conclusion, after taking an inventory of the data I collected throughout the process of this lesson and throughout the school year, I had come to the conclusion that my teaching strategies, interactive reading and writing strategies, were successful. My students were able to understand the elements of the stories we studied for these lessons. Furthermore, throughout the school year, my

students were able to use this knowledge of story elements for all of their reading activities. At the end of the school year or third trimester assessment 77.7% of my class was reading at levels 3, 4, 8, and 10 with a reading comprehension level of 95%. In addition 77.7% of the students in this class had achieved scores of 3s and 4s, which are proficient and advanced scores according to our kindergarten writing rubric, at the end of the school year. Their interactive and independent writing samples showed that my students have the ability to write using conventional writing process to communicate their thoughts and their ideas.

Throughout the process of this lesson, my students also demonstrated that they learned to use critical thinking, as they were able to analyzed, described, compared and contrast the different parts of the stories, or elements of the stories, and they were able to use this knowledge throughout the year during their reading and writing activities. Furthermore, the samples I collected from the students' independent writing, during their daily journal writing, showed that my students understand that there is a connection between oral language and written language, and that they can use the writing process to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and opinions.

As I analyzed the result from my collected data, I discovered that by using authentic literature and by combining the strategies of Whole Language and phonic instruction to teach the writing and reading process to my students, I was able to meet my students individual needs in reading and writing. See presentation of findings for trimester results.

Even though I am using a three week lesson plan for the purpose of this project. I like to assure you that this is the same process I used throughout the year during the language arts portion of instruction in my class. During the language arts portion of our daily lesson I always do reading aloud/model reading, interactive reading and writing activities, as well as independent journal time. I always follow this structure in my classroom and I have notice that my students make excellent progress throughout the year in reading and writing.

Looking back at my data, I am happy to see that my objectives for this study were successfully accomplished. My objectives for this study were using literature and a combination of whole language and phonics instruction strategies to teach literacy, reading and writing proficiency, in a kindergarten bilingual class.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

After taking an inventory of the data I collected throughout this school year, and using the information of the assessments in letter/sound, phonemic awareness, and writing, which are given each trimester to assess students' academic achievement in developmental reading and writing, and the reading assessment which is given at the end of the year to assess reading fluency and reading comprehension, I had come to the conclusion that the instruction strategies I used during the language arts portion of the day are effective. I used a combination of whole language instruction and phonic instruction strategies daily, during interactive reading and writing activities, to teach letter/sound, phonemic awareness, as well as reading and writing within context of literature. These strategies have proved to be an effective way to teaching because students have the opportunity to learn these strategies during meaningful and realistic reading and writing activities, and not through the use of phonics exercises in isolation or out of context.

Discussion and Presentation of Findings

The results of this study illustrate the following, during the first trimester writing assessment out of 20 students 4 students received a score of one, 3 students received a score of two, 7 students received a score of three, and 6 students received a score of four which is the top score.

For the second trimester writing results I lost 3 of my original 20 students and a new student was placed in my classroom. This gave me a total of 18 students. Seventeen of these students are the original students who started the year in my classroom and a new student who started in my class 21 days prior to the assessment. In my district if a student has been in a classroom for twenty days the teacher is responsible for given him/her a grade. Thus, the writing results for the second trimester assessment are as follow: out of 18 students 4 students received a score of one, 1 student received a score of two, 4 students received a score of three, and 9 students received a score of four which again is the top score.

For the third trimester writing assessment I lose another of my original 17 students and gain a new student. I still have a total of 18 students. I have 16 students

who started the year in my classroom and 2 new students. One of these students has been with me for three months and my new student has been with me for a month. Thus, the results for the third trimester writing assessment are as follow: Out of the 18 students in my class 1 student received a score of one, 3 students received a score of two, 2 students received a score of three, and 12 students received a score of four which is the top score. These twelve students are students who started in my class from the beginning of the year.

As stated before, according to RUSD writing rubric, a score of one means that the writer was able to tell his/her teacher a complex and complete sentence but represented that though in writing by copying a string of letters not related to knowledge of letters or sound. A score of one is considered "below basic" for first trimester assessment.

A paper achieves a score of two when it contains evidence of directionality and spacing between words. The writer has applied knowledge of beginning and medial sound to represent the words written in a sentence.

A score of three indicates that the student is able to write a simple sentence. All letters are formed

correctly, high frequency words are spelled correctly, and spacing and directionality are appropriately used.

When a student obtains a four, which is the top score, it means that this written sample displays the characteristic of a proficient piece of kindergarten writing. The paper contains greater complexity in meaning than a typical score of three. Grade level high frequency words are spelled correctly and prepositional phrases have been used and clearly identify by the student. As mentioned above, this is the criterion used in our district to assess students' proficiency in writing.

For the reading portion of the assessment, using the Developmental Reading Assessment method used in our district, the reading levels are scored as follow: levels A-1 indicate below basic, reading level 2-3 indicate proficient and reading levels 4 indicates advanced. A reading level of 3 or 4 is expected at the end of kindergarten with a reading comprehension level minimum of 90%.

For the third trimester or end-of-year reading the results were as follow: out of 18 students 4 students were reading at level A, which is a below basic reading grade for kindergarten at the end of the year; 2 students were reading at level 3 which is a proficient reading level at

the end of the year in kindergarten, and 3 students were reading at level 4 which is the score that indicates proficient at the end of kindergarten. However, in my class I also had 6 students reading at level 8, and 3 students reading at level 10 with a reading comprehension of 95%. It is important to notice that a reading level of 8 with a reading comprehension of 90% and above is a basic reading level for first trimester reading in first grade, and a reading level of 10 with a reading comprehension of 95% and above is a proficient reading level for first trimester reading in first grade. For the purpose of this project, it is essential to illustrate that at the end of the year I had a total of 14 out of 18 students reading at an advanced reading level with a reading comprehension level average of 95%.

Summary

In conclusion, as evidence presented by the following charted information and the above presentation of findings, the results show that using interactive reading and writing activities to promote literacy, reading and writing proficiency, is an effective way to teaching. This methodology of instruction allows students to participate in an interactive environment in which they are all active

participant in their learning. In addition, while students actively participate in these interactive reading and writing activities, the teacher can assess students literacy development on a daily basis.

Table 1. Kindergarten Writing Test Scores

This table shows first, second and third trimester writing results, scored using the kindergarten writing rubric.

No. of students

20														
19														
18														
17														
16														
15														
14														
13														
12														■
11														■
10														■
9									■					■
8									■					■
7			■						■					■
6			■	■					■					■
5			■	■					■					■
4	■		■	■		■		■	■					■
3	■	■	■	■		■		■	■			■		■
2	■	■	■	■		■		■	■			■	■	■
1	■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■		■	■	■	■
No	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4

First trimester
writing results.

Second trimester
writing results.

Third trimester
writing results.

Trimester Writing Results: Rubric Scores 1 through 4.

1= Below Basic

2= Basic

3= Proficient

4= Advanced

Table 2. Kindergarten Reading Test Scores

This table shows third trimester/end of year reading results, scored using the Developmental Reading Assessment Method.

No. of students

20																	
19																	
18																	
17																	
16																	
15																	
14																	
13																	
12				■													
11				■													
10				■													
9				■													
8				■													
7				■													
6				■													
5				■													
4	■			■													
3	■			■													
2	■		■	■													
1	■		■	■													
level	A-1	2	3	4+													

End of the year kindergarten reading scores by reading level.

DRA Reading Levels.

A-1= Below Basic

2= Basic

3 = Proficient

4+= Advanced

At the end of the year kindergarten reading expectations are levels 3 and/or 4+.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Included in Chapter Five was a presentation of the conclusions gleamed as a result of completing the project. Further, the recommendations extracted from the project are presented. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary.

Conclusions

The conclusions extracted from the project follows:

1. At the end of kindergarten 77.7% of the students had achieved proficiency in reading, reading comprehension and writing.
2. Teaching strategies proved effective as evident by students reading and writing proficiency levels at the end of kindergarten.
3. The combined pedagogy of Whole Language instruction and phonics instruction strategies proved effective as noted by the overall results achieved throughout the process of this study as well as the findings reported by Escamilla, (2000).

Recommendations

The recommendations resulting from the project follows:

1. The classroom teacher needs to have the pedagogical knowledge in the reading and writing process in order to facilitate children's literacy development and learning.
2. The teacher needs to understand the importance of teaching to the students' potential and not to the developmental level of the students.
3. The teacher, as a sociocultural mediator of instruction, is willing to take into consideration students' cultural, social and economic background, as well as to allow students to use their cultural knowledge as the foundation to acquire new knowledge.
4. It is important that the teacher knows how to help students make the connection between oral language and written language and how to use this connection in the context of authentic communication.

Summary

To summarize, the conclusion extracted from the project indicates the following, at the end of kindergarten, 77.7% of the students in this classroom had achieved proficiency in reading, reading comprehension and writing. The combined pedagogy of Whole Language instruction and phonics instruction strategies, used in this classroom throughout the school year and during the process of this project, proved effective as noted by the overall results achieved by these students in literacy, reading and writing.

Lastly, the recommendations presented for this project indicate that in order to achieve reading and writing proficiency in grades k-2, and in my opinion at any grade level, it is important that the classroom teacher have the pedagogical knowledge in literacy, reading and writing, in order to facilitate children's literacy development and learning. The teacher also needs to understand the importance of teaching to the students' potential and not to the developmental level of the students. In addition, it is important that the teacher, as a sociocultural mediator of instruction, is willing to take into consideration students' cultural, social and economic background, as well as to allow students to use

their cultural knowledge as the foundation to acquire new knowledge. Furthermore, in order to achieve success in reading and writing, it is important that the teacher knows how to help students make the connection between oral language and written language and how to use this connection in the context of authentic communication.

Following is a description of the writing rubric criterion for kindergarten which explains the four different scores used to grade students' papers.

Writing Rubric

4 Advanced

To achieve this score a written sample needs to have all the qualities of the proficient score and also

- May display increased complexity in meaning.
- May use capitalization and punctuation correctly.
- Reflects increasing knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.
- Correctly spells grade-level high frequency words.
- Consistently used spacing and directionality.

3 Proficient

To achieve this score a written sample needs to have all the qualities of a basic level score and also needs to have

- At least one simple sentence.
- It needs to follow the requirements of the assignment.
- Uppercase and lowercase letters need to be formed correctly.
- The student uses knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to represent beginning, ending, and some medial sounds in words.
- Spells some high frequency words correctly.
- Uses left-to-right, top-to-bottom progression.
- Uses spaces between words.

2 Basic

A written sample that achieves this score indicates that the students can do the following

- Uses some beginning sounds or other letter-sound relationships to represent words.
- Uses inconsistent spacing between words.
- May copy letters, words, or sentences from the environment.
- May demonstrate some evidence of directionality or spacing.
- May spell simple, high frequency words correctly.

1 Below Basic

A written sample that achieves this scores indicates that the students can do the following

- Communicates using pictures, scribble writing, letter-like marks, or random letter.
- Exhibits little or no evidence of directionality

APPENDIX A:
STUDENTS' WRITING SAMPLES

4 Advanced

To achieve this score a written sample needs to have all the qualities of the proficient score and also

- May display increased complexity in meaning.
- May use capitalization and punctuation correctly.
- Reflects increasing knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.
- Consistently used spacing and directionality.

En - el - otoño - las
hojas - se - ponen
amarilladas - y - amarillas
Nancy

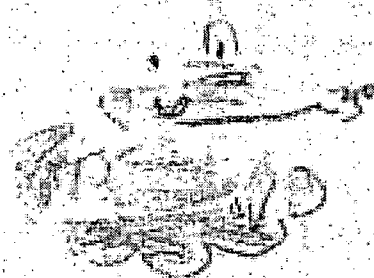
DATE: 11/11/11

4. Advanced

To achieve this score a written sample needs to have all the qualities of the proficient score and also

- May display increased complexity in meaning.
- May use capitalization and punctuation correctly.
- Reflects increasing knowledge of letter-sound correspondence.
- Consistently used spacing and directionality.

Mark



Ra-dita-es-tava-
quie-te-ci-ta-/-la-e-ga-
se-to-mo-to-la-mo-to-

3 Proficient

To achieve this score a written sample needs to have all the qualities of a basic level score and also needs to have

- At least one simple sentence.
- It needs to follow the requirements of the assignment.
- Uppercase and lowercase letters need to be formed correctly.
- The student uses knowledge of letter-sound correspondence to represent beginning, ending and some medial sounds in words.
- Spells some high frequency words correctly.
- Uses left-to-right, top-to-bottom progression.
- Uses spaces between words.



Rene

May 13, 2002

- RaNi-te - di so - toz hámble -

- ten oo - ni - a m u e r s o -

viene

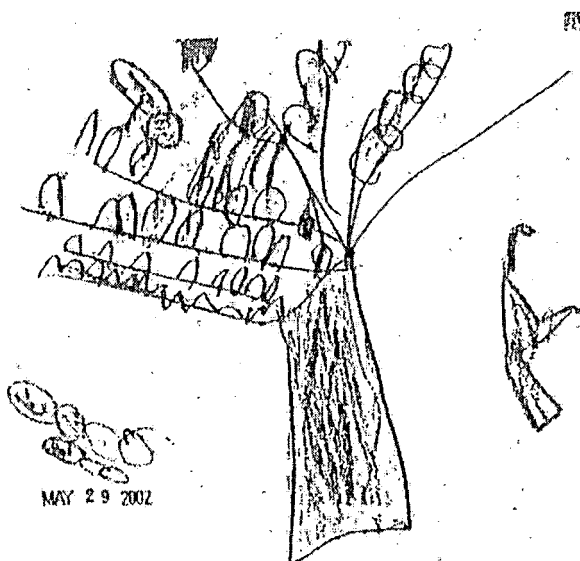
almuerzo

- ven se r cas. - - - - -

2 Basic

A written sample that achieves this scores indicates that the students can do the following

- Uses some beginning sounds or other letter-sound relationships to represent words.
- Uses inconsistent spacing between words.
- May copy letters, words, or sentences from the environment.
- May demonstrate some evidence of directionality or spacing.
- May spell simple, high frequency words correctly.



Javier

En la primavera al árbol
le van creciendo hojas. (2)

1 Below Basic

A written sample that achieves this scores indicates that the students can do the following

- Communicates using pictures, scribble writing, letter-like marks, or random.
- Exhibits little or no evidence of directionality.

Oct. 24, 2001

Guadalupe

Y me porte bien.

Yo me porte bien.

APPENDIX B:
INTERACTIVE WRITING LOS TRES COCHINITOS

Personajes

- El lobo feróz
- Los tres cochinitos
- Los mormos.

Problema

El problema del cuento fue que el lobo quería soplar las casitas de los cochinitos.

Los tres cochinitos

Solución

Escenario

- 1- La casita de paja.
- 2- La casita de feno.
- 3- La casita de ladrillos.

Los cochinitos hicieron sus casitas de ladrillos.

K-AM 24/2-8/02

APPENDIX C:
INTERACTIVE WRITING LOS TRES CERDITOS

Personajes

1- Los tres cerditos.

2- El lobo feroz
malo.

3- Los policías.

Problema.

El lobo se comió
a los dos cerditos.

ESCENARIOS

1- La casa de
paja.
2- La casa de palos.

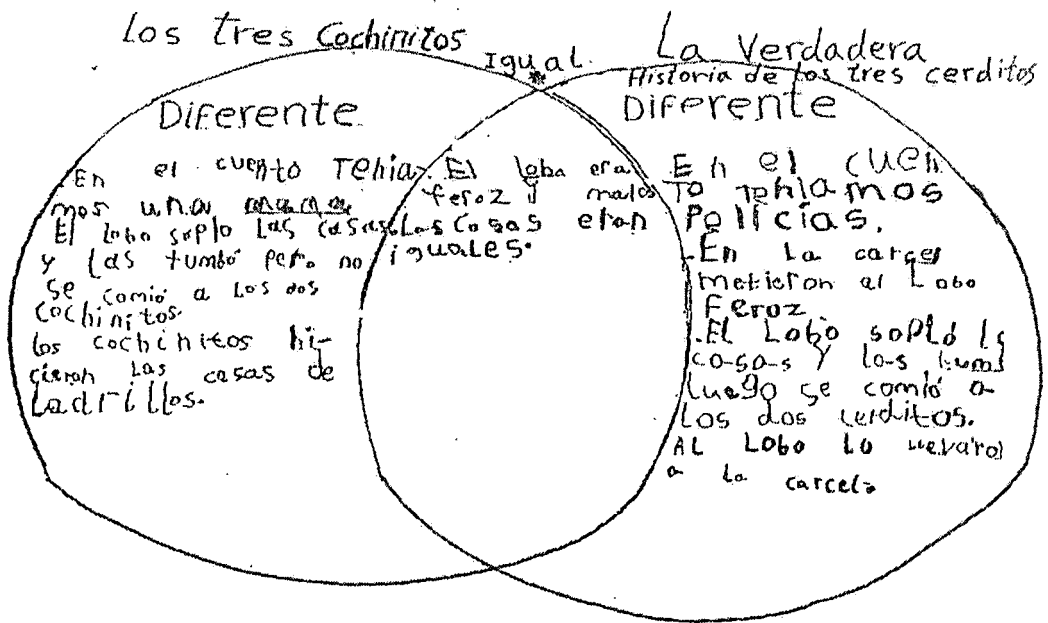
3- La casa de
los ladrillos.

LA VERDADERA HISTORIA DE LOS TRES CERDITOS!

Solución

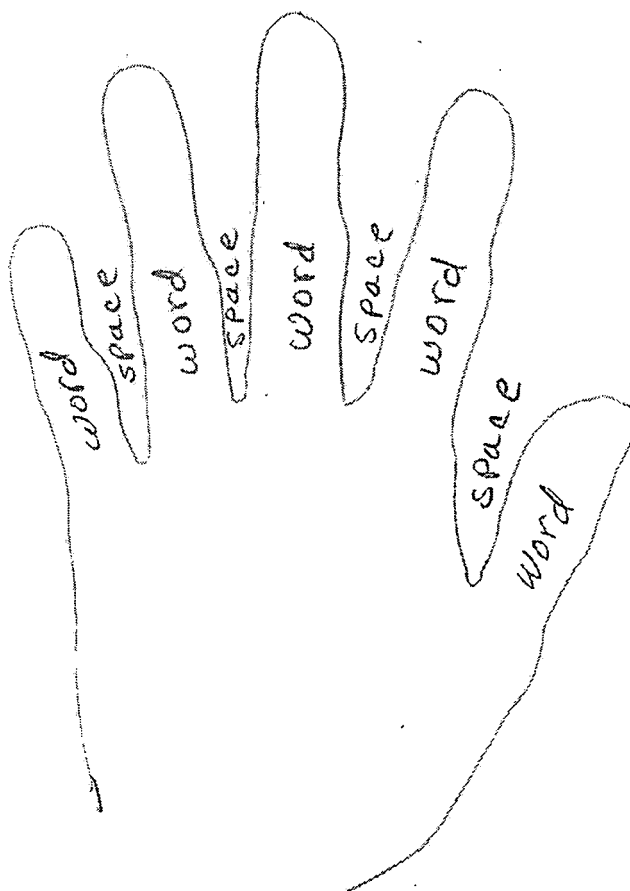
Los policías se llevaron
al lobo malo y feroz

APPENDIX D:
INTERACTIVE WRITING VENN DIAGRAM



APPENDIX E:
INSTRUMENT FOR MEDIATING INSTRUCTION

The model of a hand, used as an instrument for
Mediating instruction in writing.



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